Moving Forward:
Tradition and Transformation

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Edited by

Heather M. Morgan and Ruth Morris

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FOREWORD

PROFESSOR TIM INGOLD

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Moving forward – what an inspiring idea! It is inspiring because it acknowledges that movement is of the essence of scholarship. For all of us, it is a never-ending journey, in which what counts are not final destinations but the multitude of interesting things we discover along the way. But it is also inspiring because it recognises that it is a forward movement, in which we are forever proceeding beyond where we are now. This does not mean that we know in advance where we are heading. Indeed if we did – if we knew our destination even before setting out – we would not really be moving forward at all. That is why those who triumphantly announce the dawn of a new paradigm invariably offer more of the same. The whole point about moving forward is not that it connects what is already known, but that it continually opens a path into the unknown. The challenge for the scholar is to keep on going, to open things up, and to improvise a way ahead, rather than to achieve targets already set. It is to *resist closure*. Beware those who claim to know where we will be in five, ten or fifty years' time, or who pretend to stand on the far side of history and to be able to propound upon the final outcome and closing date of our present era. They are not to be trusted.

A key theme of this volume, however, and of the conference on which it was based, is interdisciplinarity, and here I have some reservations. In a nutshell, I see something of a contradiction between moving forward, on the one hand, and interdisciplinarity, on the other. The problem lies in the prefix *inter-*, which puts all the emphasis on the 'between-ness' of the endeavour, as though disciplines were closed domains that could only be connected by some kind of bridging operation. Such an operation is inherently detemporalising, cutting *across* ways of knowing rather than moving *along* with them. And by the same token, it is spatialising, creating the illusion that knowledge is spread out upon the terrains of the intellect, much as the phenomena with which it deals are spread upon the surfaces of the world. It is this spatialisation that leads us to think of every

discipline as a certain terrain – that is, as a more or less bounded *field of study*. And it is at odds with the view of scholarship that I have just proposed, as an unceasing journey along what I would call *lines of interest*. This latter view, I suggest, leads us to a quite different understanding of what a discipline is – not so much a bounded field as a tangle of pathways that happen, at least for a certain period of time, to have converged. Think of knowledge, then, not as a mosaic of terrains but as a mesh of lines, converging here, diverging there, with some regions that are densely knotted and others with a more open weave.

In practice, as I know from my own experience, scholars do not inhabit fields but follow paths. They are, if you will, like walkers rather than cows. Cows graze the pastures of their fields, and are content to do so, with no particular inclination to move on. Walkers, on the other hand, are looking for the next opening, for the next gate or style that will enable them to proceed. (I say this with apologies to cows, who would probably do the same if they could.) Sometimes numerous paths converge, and scholars may find themselves following trails that many have trodden before, in the company of those still treading them now. But their lines may equally well diverge, going off into previously unexplored thickets, or joining up with other convergences. The scholar's path, however, is a continuous one. Whatever its twists and turns, or its convergences with and divergences from other paths, it crosses no territorial boundaries. Every discipline, then, is a more or less temporary convergence: not a bounded field but a binding of lines of interest spun by its several practitioners. And since the spinning continues as practitioners proceed on their way, the discipline is both processual and open-ended. The overall tangle of lines, ravelling here and unravelling there, comprises the fabric of scholarship, and each individual scholar, in pursuing his or her line, contributes to its ever-evolving weave.

Interdisciplinarity does not normally arise as a 'problem' within the ordinary practice of scholarly work. People sometimes tell me that my own work is interdisciplinary, but I have never knowingly set out to cross any disciplinary boundaries, nor have I ever encountered any. I simply find my way as I go along, following whatever clues, fragments of evidence, hunches or conjectures turn up en route. These often point to literature I should read, and as with all reading, one thing leads to another. Not uncommonly, and more by accident than design, I have found myself in new and unexpected company, joining in conversations I never imagined I would have. There is nothing novel or unusual about this. It is

how scholarship has always been done. Peruse the bibliography of any half-decent article – at least in the arts, humanities and social sciences – and you will find a kind of record of where the author has been and with whom he or she has conversed. Most authors, it turns out, have journeyed far and wide. They have done so, moreover, with their noses to the ground. One of the hallmarks of true scholarly inquiry is that it calls for a close, almost myopic engagement with the materials of study. This closeness should not, however, be confused with enclosure. If this confusion is nevertheless endemic, especially among those with responsibility for the funding and management of research, it is because its roots are deeply embedded in the modern constitution.

Fundamental to this constitution is a logical operation that I have called *inversion*. This logic has the effect of converting the pathways along which life is lived and knowledge grown into boundaries within which it is contained. Thus the scholar whose nose is close to the ground, following a scent like a hunter on the trail, is supposed instead to be glued to one spot, as if at the base of a vortex, where he or she is condemned to "drill down" for data, breaking through the opaque surfaces of things in order to reveal their hidden secrets. Time and again, scholars of great erudition and immense breadth of reading are advised by their funders and managers – who are often neither erudite nor widely read – that they are spending too much time inside their respective vortices, or what are rather offensively called 'disciplinary silos', and that they need to get out more. With the logic of inversion, however, the only way out is up. Knowledge, in this view, is not grown along paths but built up, like a great palace whose rooms become ever more lavish and capacious as you ascend from floor to floor, from cellars stocked with vast accumulations of data, through the servants' quarters populated by lowly research assistants, to the modest apartments of mid-career disciplinarians, and ultimately to the grand halls of fame where those who have made it to the top conduct their grandiloquent interdisciplinary discourses.

For those who hold to such an architectonic conception of the totality of knowledge, the value of interdisciplinarity is that it affords a vision of the whole that is otherwise divided, at lower levels, into more or less sealed compartments. Yet such a vision, I believe, can impede scholarship in at least three ways. First, when interdisciplinarity itself becomes self-conscious, the open-ended pursuit of lines of inquiry takes second place to the formation and communication of closed disciplinary identities. Scholars whose lines have converged, and are moving forward together,

suddenly turn to face one another across what is perceived to be a divide. Fences appear where none were there before. Secondly, in an architectonics of knowledge conceived as having a segmentary structure, the path from one discipline to another can only be negotiated by way of the larger blocks within which they are nested. Instead of following a multitude of interweaving pathways, communication is constrained to run along arterial routes between these blocks (such as "natural science", "social science", "the arts" and "the humanities"). Thirdly, to think of the discipline as a compartment within an architectonic structure is to reduce it from what it really is (or should be) – namely, a conversation among fellow travellers following convergent lines of interest – to a particular and regimented body of data, method and theory.

Rather that aiming for interdisciplinarity, I believe we should seek to establish a proper view of what a discipline is. We should recognise that each and every discipline is a *process* in which both researchers and students can participate and, through their participation, forge a sense of identity and belonging. The way to get rid of an outmoded conception of the academic discipline is not to claim that disciplines themselves are outmoded, let alone to replace them with a notion of interdisciplinarity that merely reproduces the territorialized conception we want to move away from. It is rather to show that as scholarly conversations, disciplines themselves are ongoing, open-ended and mutually responsive. Who needs interdisciplinarity then?

Tim Ingold
Aberdeen
December 2010

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We would also like to extend our thanks to all participants in *Moving Forward* who contributed to making it such a successful conference in 2009. In particular, we are grateful to those who have committed their work to this volume.

In addition, we are indebted to the College of Arts and Social Sciences, the Roberts Fund and the Schools of Business; Divinity, History and Philosophy; Education and Music; Language and Literature; Law and Social Science, at the University of Aberdeen, for their generous financial contributions to the event from which this publication derives.

Finally, sincere thanks to one another for making the editorial process an enjoyable experience.

Heather M. Morgan and Ruth Morris
Aberdeen
October 2010

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

HEATHER M. MORGAN AND RUTH MORRIS
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

This volume has been compiled as a result of the quality and reception of papers presented at the *Moving Forward* Postgraduate Conference, held at the University of Aberdeen 21-22 July 2009. *Moving Forward* effectively reached its tenth year in 2009. The conference previously ran under different guises including the University of Aberdeen's *Faculty of Social Sciences and Law Postgraduate Conference* for four years, and latterly the *College of Arts and Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference* for five years. As the conference reached its decade anniversary, its having become firmly established as an annual event was clearly evidenced by attendance and standard of participation. The 2009 conference was generously supported by the College of Arts and Social Sciences and the Roberts Fund, University of Aberdeen. The conference was also the recipient of additional funds from each of the College's constituent schools and delegate travel bursaries from two Higher Education Academy Subject Centres. Without this funding, the conference would not have been the tremendous success it was and we, as editors of this collection, would like to take this opportunity to once again thank our sponsors for making the event possible.

The remit of *Moving Forward* was, and continues to be, a postgraduate conference which brings together research students from different departments, schools and universities in order to raise, discuss and debate the common and diverse issues experienced in the postgraduate arena. It is a conference which is both run by and for postgraduate students and attracted many delegates from across the world, adding an international atmosphere to the 2009 conference. As the emphasis is very much upon interdisciplinary issues, both the conference and this collection incorporate the disciplines of Business; Divinity, History and Philosophy; Education and Music; Language and Literature; Law and Social Sciences. Indeed the theme of the 2009 conference was the broad title "interdisciplinarity" and

it is hoped that this volume expresses this diversity alongside the overarching theme of "tradition and transformation."

The interdisciplinary nature of the 2009 conference was a conscious decision as it endeavoured to reveal that disciplinary boundaries within many subject areas are loosely drawn and are rather porous. There are numerous contiguities between and within different disciplines and this edited volume has sought to highlight these similarities. The interdisciplinary and common research areas of the presenting conference delegates at *Moving Forward* in 2009 illustrates that our similarities within the arts and social sciences are greater than our differences. Although this volume incorporates papers as presented within a conference setting, its aims and attractions are not limited to this conference (i.e. its past and future delegates). This is because the collection brings together papers according to their theme, which has relevance and applicability to specialists and non-specialists across a variety of disciplines. It is precisely by focusing upon theme rather than discipline that the conference, and indeed this volume, seeks to reinforce the interconnections between different approaches.

It is intended that the selected papers demonstrate and embody both the achievements of the 2009 *Moving Forward* conference, and also the professional expectations of our endeavour. The publication of the papers therefore represents another step towards enabling postgraduate work to be disseminated along similar lines to those of more established academics. This is an important chapter in the ever evolving story of *Moving Forward*. More importantly, it is hoped that this is a stimulating collection for all academics and students of the arts and social sciences.

Although *Moving Forward: Tradition and Transformation* is a loose title in many respects, it seems that the dichotomy between past and future, the desire to respect history but also to effect change, and the presence of the present, were three issues that resounded throughout the conference contributions, and are those specifically captured within the selected papers. From each of the six disciplinary areas ranging across the arts and social sciences, delegates used the freedom of their positions as early-career researchers to boldly explore inter- and intra- relations both between and among these concepts. They engaged in this project without fear of censure, but with enthusiasm and energy for academic knowledge, development and research output. Indeed through the papers received, and particularly those subsequently chosen for inclusion in this collection, distinct in their disciplinary origins, approaches and foci, we are emphasising

the many similarities that exist among the arts and social science subjects. By presenting a variety of papers, our collection touches upon many related subject areas, research topics and theoretical and methodological approaches, which will be of interest to established academics, early-career scholars and postgraduate students.

The title *Moving Forward: Tradition and Transformation* encapsulates a number of competing ideas. There is the sense of both movement and stasis, of regression and progression, and of gain and loss. The three sections within this volume have been arranged so as to grapple with these similarly conflicting issues. The first section, "Backwards or Forwards," challenges both the positive connotations of "progress" or forward movement, and the equally pejorative associations aligned with "regression." Through a discussion of Neil Gunn's *Highland River* which is read within the context of Jungian theory, Keir, a researcher in Scottish Literature, argues that regression takes on its opposite associations by being regarded as a positive step, a stepping back in the right direction. Similarly Bâcle challenges preconceptions by questioning whether the notion of "moving forward" is always rightly connected with a sense of progression. Bâcle, a doctoral candidate in Philosophy, argues that by considering Maine de Biran and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's emphases upon interiority and individuality, the notion of progress is equally dependent upon the individual. Consequently any progress is inward. This in turn gives rise to questions about whether "moving forward" in a physical sense is either possible or desirable. Within these two literary analyses, the notion of movement, either backwards or forwards, is challenged and along with this are the common associations made between the two slippery concepts of progression and regression.

Section Two evolves the discussion by taking this notion of challenge to its extremes in the appropriately entitled section "Conflicts and Resolutions." As with the previous title, there is a similar juxtaposition of two seeming binaries, but again these papers seek to deconstruct such polar opposites. The title is at once multifarious, and seemingly simplistic in its suggestion. As such, the papers consider the broad-reaching, extensive and very complex interactions between the terms. Sociology postgraduate Lian considers the Chinese model of, and relationship between, government and citizen, notions of common sense versus authority, and, in particular, the discord between the state and the people. Through this discussion there is at once both conflict and resolution. Osuigwe analyses the promise of transformation in the Niger Delta

Conflict. He employs a theological perspective in relation to the political economy of oil, which is an innovative approach. Again, there is a similar coalescence of conflict and resolution. Warrener, a postgraduate researcher in Politics and International Relations, engages with the memories of female soldiers in Sierra Leone. In exploring the women's narratives, she suggests that their visibility as soldiers is diminished during demobilisation. This is because of the absence of women's formal recognition as soldiers. Each of these papers analyse and inform local conflicts, but they also address global issues and challenge global social thought, making their scope both micro and macro in scale. In terms of tradition, this section explores current situations in three locales, and, in terms of transformation, it proposes three fresh perspectives, each of which offers a novel means of interpreting and understanding resolution in relation to conflict.

The third section considers two other dichotomous terms, "regulation" and "destiny." As with the previous sections, on the surface, these may seem to be ostensibly discreet and polar in their relationship with each other. However these papers seek to conflate the two in order to interrogate this perception. In the first paper, doctoral candidate in Law, Dizon antagonises the rigidity of these terms by discussing the possibility or impossibility of proscribing rules to govern internet content and user behaviour. In so doing, the very notion of "regulation" of technology is deferred from the actual "control" of the technology itself, to broader cultural and legal issues. In this diffusion of regulatory "rules", any notion of control becomes increasingly problematic. In the second paper, Jaap, a postgraduate researcher in Music, approaches the concept from the other end of the "regulation" cline, by considering the development of talent amongst internationally renowned musicians. Like "destiny", the notion of "talent" is ethereal, abstract, and seemingly impossible to regulate. This paper seeks to make the terms more concrete with recourse to qualitative data about musical ability and in so doing converges the seeming dichotomies in the title of this section.

It is through each of these sections that the papers can take their place within the overarching themes of tradition and transformation. Each section looks at two seeming opposites whether it is moving forwards or backwards, conflict and resolution, or regulation versus control, and seeks to position them on a spectrum of possibilities, with these terms at each extreme, rather than as isolated concepts within themselves. By re-imagining these terms in this way, tradition and transformation do not seem as dichotomous as they are often conceived. All these concepts can

be conflated. Tradition may well relate to the past, to the status quo, to a particular way of doing things, but yet if transformation does not automatically assume progression, evolution, or directional movement, but more “difference”, there is not such a gulf between the two terms.

SECTION ONE:

BACKWARDS OR FORWARDS

EDITED BY RUTH MORRIS

INTRODUCTION

Through two papers, this section discusses and challenges the idea of directional movement: both moving backwards and forwards, regressing and progressing. The concept of "moving backwards" is instructive of regression or the movement towards a less advanced state. Conversely "moving forwards", the very title of the conference, is often connected with the notion of progress, of evolving, of developing towards a better or more advanced state. Consequently its connotations are more overtly positive. These two papers challenge these connotations by questioning whether such movement is always destined to have the same result. Does a movement forward always involve a positive development and does a movement in the opposite direction always equate with a regressive step? These two papers have been deliberately positioned at the beginning of this volume as a way of questioning the theme of the conference and so hope to raise questions which are equally applicable to the rest of the volume.

In the first paper, Keir interrogates both the positive connotation of progression and the negative connotation of regression through a discussion of Neil Gunn's *Highland River*. Using Jung's developmental theory, in which he argued that an individual's life is a continual interplay of regression and progression, of moving backwards and then forwards, *Highland River* offers a useful vehicle through which to discuss these notions of movement. The paper argues that regression can be positively considered as a stepping "back" in the right direction. By regressing to the source of the Highland River, Keir argues that the character Kenn returns to an idyllic state separate from the failings of civilisation and society. He regresses to feelings of safety and protection, regresses to commonality, community and a safer world. This regression challenges the pejorative connotations which are more frequently associated with this concept.

In the second paper, Bâcle approaches the idea from the opposite end of the cline by delineating the idea of "moving forward" and its positive connotations. By using two thinkers from the late Eighteenth Century, the French philosopher Maine de Biran, and the English poet, Romantic, literary critic and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Bâcle challenges what "moving forward" actually means. The paper argues that although

"moving forward" is not reducible to a single meaning or definition and is applicable to a plethora of different phenomena in different contexts, dependent upon the intentions and the system of values subscribed by the individuals or the communities involved, there is still a lot of agreement about the notion of "progress" in contemporary western society. The paper is concerned with the confrontation between two rival theories of progress: one which is founded on the external approach to human knowledge and the other founded on a more subjective approach to human experience and values.

Within these two literary analyses, the notion of movement in either and both direction(s), backwards or forwards, resonates. These papers clearly contribute to the wider exploration of tradition and transformation within this volume. Tradition can be aligned with moving backwards as there is a sense of sticking with the status quo and a reluctance to develop or progress towards a different state. Conversely both transformation and moving forwards encapsulate the idea of positive change. However, through challenging the notions of backwards and forwards movement, these papers also interrogate the very notions of tradition and transformation.

"THE TIDAL LAWS OF THE LIBIDO": THE RIGHT TO REGRESS IN NEIL M. GUNN'S *HIGHLAND RIVER*

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Of all Neil M. Gunn's novels, *Highland River* is his most overtly modernist work. Apparently prompted by a visit to Inverness by T.S. Eliot in his capacity as a director at the publishing house Faber and Faber, *Highland River* employs many of the familiar stylistic features of avant-garde Modernism: non-linear narrative, a concern with the interiority of the main character, and a preference for investigating the meaning of events which have already happened instead of a plot-driven, forward-oriented narrative (Hart and Pick 1985, 137-138). Perhaps more than any Gunn novel, *Highland River* demands to be freed from any narrow categorisation: it is a philosophical novel where the evolution of thought takes precedence over narrative fact. Gunn would later claim that *Highland River* "had no plot at all", arguing that it should be thought of as a novel in the modern style (Gunn 1987, 232). *Highland River* deserves to be read in the intellectual context of modernism, and particularly in the light of Jungian psychology, which, as will be seen, informs much of the novel's structure and emphases.

There are three Jungian theories which form a framework for *Highland River*: introversion/extraversion, the collective unconscious and the archetypes, and the reciprocal regression/progression pattern of personal development. This paper is concerned with the last strand of the framework; that is exploring Jung's developmental theory. Jung argued that an individual's life is a continual interplay of regression and progression, of moving backwards and then forward, and used rivers as a central metaphor, all of which seemed to have impacted on *Highland River.*

Gunn alludes directly to this theory when he writes in *Highland River* "Contract and expand, systole and diastole: the river flows" (Gunn 1996, 100). Systole and diastole are the medical terms for the beating of the heart, but they are key metaphors used by Jung in his description of what he called the "tidal laws of the libido," the cyclical alternation between regression and progression through the individual's life (Jung 1971, 213). Richard Price, in *The Fabulous Matter of Fact*, points out that Gunn may have read Jung's essay "On Psychical Energy," which contains the following summary:

> One of the most important energic phenomena of psychic life […] the progression and regression of libido. Progression could be defined as the daily advance of the process of psychological adaptation. We know that adaptation is not something that is achieved once and for all, though there is a tendency to believe the contrary. This is due to mistaking a person's psychic attitude for actual adaptation. We can satisfy the demands of adaptation only by means of a suitably directed attitude. Consequently, the achievement of adaptation is completed in two stages: (1) attainment of attitude, (2) completion of adaptation by means of the attitude. (Price 1991, 68; Jung 1961, 59)

Jung adds that "The progression of libido might therefore be said to consist in a continual satisfaction of the demands of environmental considerations", in the sense of "environment" as "surroundings" (Jung 1960, 32). This is an important consideration when reflecting upon the condition of "modernity" as a distinct rupture from what has come before, since the huge changes in the patterns of life after the First World War caused massive demands to be exerted on the individuals who lived through them. For Jung, regression has a vital part to play in the unending process of adaptation:

> Progression might be compared to a watercourse that flows from a mountain into a valley. The damming up of libido is analogous to a specific obstruction in the direction of flow, such as a dike, which transforms the kinetic energy of the flow into the potential energy of a reservoir. Thus dammed back, the water is forced into another channel, if as a result of the damming it reaches a level that permits it to flow off in another direction. (Jung 1960, 38)

The purpose of regression in Jung's theory, therefore, is to allow a change in direction, a change in attitude which maintains the process of adaptation. The journey of the main protagonist, Kenn, to the source of his *Highland River* is easily and fruitfully read as Gunn's justification for a

useful regression, a return to the past, though not to infantilism as, for instance, Freudian psychology might lead one to believe.[1] The key tone of the novel in this respect is the cry that "Our river took a wrong turning somewhere! But we haven't forgotten the source," (Gunn 1996, 113-114). Kenn returns from adult life to childhood memory in "dammed up" moments, deriving from the river the psychological means to go forwards again. This kind of regression, Kenn notes, is generally looked down upon:

> Going from the mouth to the source may well seem to be reversing the natural order, to be going back from the death of the sea, where individuality is lost, back to the source of the stream, where individuality is born. (Gunn 1996, 42)

"Reversing the natural order" in this quotation mirrors the pattern of Jungian regression, with Kenn flowing upstream, back towards birth, in an effort to reclaim his individuality. This understanding helps unpack some of the more problematic statements in the novel, such as Kenn's earliest childhood memory:

> The beginnings of life […] had little to do with a lonely individuality struggling to self-knowledge in the wastes. Indeed he constantly strove to be, and was, carried on the great human currents of life. And nowhere in his early years did he find such happiness and protection as where the great currents found the sea. (Gunn 1996, 42)

This passage would seem to support the reading of Kenn's journey as a return to infantile behaviour, an abnegation of his individual existence, and a denial of adult responsibilities. The Jungian reading, however, emphasises that such retrospective passages can only be, for the sake of the individual's health, pauses in a greater forward movement. Although regression can reconnect the adult Kenn with "great human currents of life" and feelings of "happiness and protection," to surrender his individuality is impossible. The "great human currents" which sweep up the child's being, become in the adult a concern with "community," with finding true communication with another, not simply the erasure of self. Regression, in Jung's "tidal" scheme, must always lead to progression for the individual to maintain his mental well-being, and can never be a permanent refusal of adult responsibility.

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[1] Freud's distaste for regression is demonstrated by the fact that it only exists within his system as an explanation for not developing normally, and thus coming to the attention of the therapist.

The key to understanding the therapeutic potential of Kenn's regression lies in the opposition of "the great human currents" to the lack of community in the depiction of modernity as portrayed by *Highland River*. This opposition is problematised by the fact that, alongside Kenn's "useful regression," there are depictions of destructive regressions that are simply returns to childhood. This useless regression appears in *Highland River* in the representation of a cosmopolitan background, with Gunn offering the following characterisation of regression, which is also, crucially, a characterisation of avant-garde literary modernism:

> Once, in a Parisian dive, where a blind old man with a face marbled like a Greek satyr played a piano-accordion and one of the dancing girls insisted on putting her hand on his knee, he had picked up a copy of *Transition*, which opened at a poem by a young American, consisting of chopped lengths of blunt statement to the effect that when a man mentioned the word Beauty, he (the poet) replied s--t, and, when the word was mentioned again, left the room on the pretext that the man was making sexual advances. Kenn's laughter had been abrupt. It was not the genuine intensity of the poet's reaction, not even his state of mind, sick or sickened, but the utter fashionableness of his literary attitude that got Kenn. Somehow out of his cliff-top knowledge he realised in a flash what the fellow would have to work through before he could regard, say, Keats with less than a jaundiced eye. It was a moment of revelation. (Gunn 1996, 50)

Conspicuously absent here is the "happiness and protection" identified with regression to the communal. The avant-garde is not nearly as advanced as it would think itself to be; it is merely "sick or sickened," "jaundiced," carrying the burden of a great deal of material needing to be "work[ed] through." The avant-garde poet is seen as having failed to adapt to the new "environmental conditions" of modernity, and so we can see that Gunn is not claiming that a return to childhood is, of itself, useful, since one can end up doing nothing more than shouting expletives because one does not like the world. In *Highland River*, therefore, some regressions are creative, while others are just derivative. Kenn refuses merely to answer, and instead searches for meaning, and attempts to create something from the memories he recovers from his past.

This search for meaning and creativity finds one of its chief metaphors in Gunn's use of the "golden age" concept. It is an imprecise one, since it seems to recall the "Golden Age" of Greek philosophy, without matching its theory of descent. Nor does it ever get fully endorsed as a solution to the problems of modernity, and remains, in *Highland River*, an image of lost, pre-modern innocence on a par with Kenn's childhood. Kenn is

convinced that "It's a far cry to the golden age," from the period he lives in, which is defined by its deviation from the state of childhood communal integration, a state which his up-river "regression" helps him find again:

> There is no denying that however it comes about, whatever the cause, such a state of happiness is produced. Kenn has experienced it over and over again. He has deliberately gone back to his Highland river to experience it afresh. And the wider his general knowledge grows, the more exacting his scientific researches are, the farther from youth he travels, the surer his responses become.
>
> Further, there is in it all a curious personal secretiveness. […] It is the suppressed laughter of a superb, secret joke. And not always suppressed! There are lonely places in the higher reaches of Kenn's river where he need no longer suppress it. Nor does he. Only if he is stalking a salmon in a pool must he close his teeth on a shout – *for fear of the keeper*. (Gunn 1996, 112)

In the "fear of the keeper," Kenn finds the root of humanity's trouble, which explains why, in his words, the "river took a wrong turn somewhere." The "keeper" becomes the icon for the forces which have destroyed the communal integration that Kenn experienced in childhood. They are the guardians of the status quo, the enforcers of the system of exploitation, which is also the system that demands constant progression from the psyche. Kenn has to poach (literally "to steal") moments of the "golden age" feelings of integration from these "keepers," but the "keeper" also serves as a metaphor for the status-quo of the early-Twentieth-Century which Gunn views as the culmination of a long process of historical progression:

> What a subject for a cinema film – from the time when the hunters of the golden age first 'settled down" and started the creation of gods and demons, priest-craft and sacrifice, kings and slaves, right up to the perfect culmination and co-ordination of these elements in the Great War!
>
> Under the gorgeous palaces and solemn temples of the Nile, what millennia of dark and bloody rites! Rome crucifying her slaves, crucifying Christ. Rome of the Inquisition, torturing in the name of Christ. The slave hordes turned into slave armies and wheeled by Napoleons to gut each other on the plains of Europe. The rise of the Industrial Age. Machines as the new torturers and the new war-weapons. The hordes marshalled in millions. High explosive for mangling the bodies. Poison gas for disintegrating the lungs. Barbed wire for exhibiting the spectacle of a slow writing death.

> And the speaking voices always solemn. The priest of Memphis. Pontius Pilate. Though the Dark Ages the voices come. From eternal damnation we deliver you in the name of God. Prison for Galileo. Fire for the Maid. Famine and disease for the hordes. Kings and King-Emperors. Statesmen. Captains of Industry. Children of the hordes in foetid mills; women as beasts of burden staggering along dark colliery tunnels.
>
> Voices of foreign secretaries as solemn today as the voice of Memphis. More money. More high explosive. More gas. In the name of Civilisation, we demand this sacrifice….
>
> Nor does all that fine rhetoric (says Kenn to his imaginary disputant) give any real idea of the unspeakable personal abominations, from the filth of sex-perversions to the drawn-out mental horrors that yelped – and still yelp – in madness, in madhouses.
>
> It's a far cry to the golden age, to the blue smoke of the heath fire and the scent of the primrose! Our river took a wrong turning somewhere! But we haven't forgotten the source. Why blame me for trying to escape to it? Who knows what's waiting for me there? (Gunn 1996, 113-114)

Escape, regression, to a place of safety and meditation is here seen as a way to subvert the brutal civilisation defended by the "keepers." Those in authority are seen to be "drivers:" slave-drivers, captains of industry, and foreign secretaries, all demanding progress, progression in the "name of [a] Civilisation" which has become unable to adapt: "More money. More high explosive. More gas," more of the same attitude. Rather than allowing themselves and those they control the psychological luxury of a useful regression, Gunn's "keeper" only demands 'sacrifice", and can only demand 'sacrifice," because to do differently would be to surrender power. The "keeper" is as trapped by the necessities of the system as the individuals over which they rule. Like Kenn's schoolmaster, who beats Kenn after he and the master almost share a moment of genuine human contact, the "keeper" is as trapped by the necessities of the system as the individuals over which they tyrannise. Kenn's regression, then, is an act of resistance, not only against the actual gamekeeper who frustrated his childhood poaching, but an act of resistance against the whole system of "progress" for which the original "keeper" is an emblem.

Gunn had already critiqued "progress" in his 1934 novel, *Butcher's Broom*, which depicts the Highland Clearances, when he wrote of:

> the conception of material gain arranged in a pattern called Progress. That this progress has proved illusory merely destroys the name [that those who

> organised the Highland Clearances] gave to their excuse, and strips their lust for possession to its naked strength. (Gunn 2002, 267-268)

Followed to its logical end, the "lust for possession" in *Butcher's Broom* resonates with the slave-drivers, captains of industry, and foreign secretaries of *Highland River*, and is a critique running through Gunn's work. It condemns a society which demands continual progression even after progress has been "proved illusory," and at the expense of recurrent cycles of destruction. Importantly, among the effects of this is mental illness: neurosis and breakdown, the "madness, in madhouses," the "unspeakable abominations." Kenn's return to the river is both an attempt to maintain his own mental health by resisting the "drawn-out mental horrors," and also an act of resistance to the prevailing systems of political control. In so doing, he orientates himself, finding a real and tangible sense of progress:

> When anyone talked to him after that about the "inevitable laws" of political economy, he laughed. That anyone should attempt to justify such conditions as he had seen in that slum backland was not so much ethically wrong as grotesquely hideous. When a politician talked of life's "glittering prizes", he visualised the politician's face as made of brass, with immense teeth, rabbit's teeth; the modern brazen idol face, worshipped by fear-held folk. There were only two ways one could behave towards it: either laugh at it good-naturally or – if ignoring it became impossible – calmly, remorselessly, bomb it to smithereens. (Gunn 1996, 183-184)

Since Kenn "never belong[s] to revolutionary political societies," his comment on society, his response, begins and ends in himself, in his turning-inward and self-scrutiny. His act of resistance to the demand of progression, to the demands of the capitalist system to collaborate in its destructive myth of progress will be found in a meditative examination of his own personal past:

> Here at last was born the notion of the source.
>
> In thought, this notion gives birth in turn to abstract words, like eternity. This is the desert place into which the prophets went to find their gods. The seers pondered here so long that they conquered their bodies and moved outside them in visions bright and clear as the evening skies beyond the moor ridges.
>
> From the populous place, again and again in the ages man has come hither to find that which was lost. (Gunn 1996, 198-199)

Kenn's personal journey has meaning outside itself simply because it is so deeply individual. In breaking away from the society which has gone wrong, and going into the "desert place" from which he can accurately describe its failings, Kenn develops a point of personal resistance which is all the more potent because it relies on a valuation of the individual far higher than that of the capitalist system. To find this sense of self-worth, as we have seen, entails a return to childhood, a regression, but instead of regressing to the selfishness of the child-state, instead of producing a Freudian, Oedipal situation, Kenn regresses to those feelings of protection and safety. He regresses to commonality, community, and, skirting communism, goes upstream into the safer world of his past. This helps him tap into the world before the First World War, before mental illness, exploitative capitalism, religion and avant-garde literature entered his consciousness. This "useful regression" dispels the myth of "progress" created by the patriarchal, imperialist, repressive, "keeper." His escape, unlike the desert prophets, does not entail an evangelical return to the world armed with the universal creed of an omnipotent god. To do so, in the scheme of the novel, would be only to reform and reinstate the civilisation of the "keeper" and offers a way out which is not the avant-garde poet's "s--t." Kenn's act of regression, the tender feelings it allows him to re-inhabit, is a revolutionary challenge to a civilisation based upon authoritarian control. The Jungian model of the psyche demands moments of radical change (in the literal sense of "radical"), and Kenn's regression is a revolution in the psyche that gives him the means of refusing to comply with a failed civilisation.

To return to the question of Gunn and his generation's strange relation to modernism of the Anglo-American mode, I would, in conclusion, hope to have indirectly shown that whereas in some of the more difficult works of modernism, intellectual content is unassimilated, and forms something of a barrier between the reader and the text, *Highland River* contains an assimilated Jungian influence. There is an apparent contradiction in "making it new" by returning to the past, but this contradiction is dissolved by the Jungian understanding that to go back, to regress, is only to prepare to move forwards once more. That, unlike T.S. Eliot, Gunn seems to have considered that past to be a remaining, but unrecognised, whole, and not a "heap of fragments" ultimately seems to be what in the end saves *Highland River* from despair (Eliot 2004, 75). Against his ruin, Kenn shores a series of commitments to, and engagements with, the future, all of which are only possible to find through the fundamental "right to regress."

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